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ABSTRACT

As part of a review of the educational goals set by Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction, those attending the state's annual conference for district administrators in 1980 were asked to participate in meetings concerning seven aspects of educational goals, and to provide relevant comments and recommendations. The areas addressed were basic skills education, education for the gifted and talented, vocational education programs, declining enrollment, inservice education, attendance problems, and general goals for elementary and secondary education. This report briefly describes the topic areas covered and summarizes the comments and recommendations generated at the conference. (PGD)

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SUMMARY REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

to the

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

from the participants in the

State Superintendent's

ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

September 17 and 18, 1980
Madison, Wisconsin

EA 013 680

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Barbara Thompson, Ph. D., State Superintendent

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Barbara Thompson, has set as a 1980-81 priority the re-examination of Wisconsin's Goals for Education. This review is being undertaken in terms of the possibilities of adding, changing, making more specific, assigning priority rankings, and/or gaining wider knowledge and acceptance of these goals originally adopted in 1973.

As a part of this important undertaking, the educational goals and specific action priorities of the State Superintendent for the period 1981-1983 were reviewed by conferees at the 1980 Annual Conference for District Administrators. There were seven sectional meetings (most of which were repeated two or three times) devoted to obtaining responses from conferees concerning these matters.

Reported in this document are the comments, suggestions, reactions, etc., of school administrators attending the 1980 Conference. These comments are now being considered carefully by the State Superintendent. The Department of Public Instruction will undertake a variety of follow-up actions in this important review of the educational goals.

SECTION ON BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION

Panelists: John Wigman, administrator, Pulaski School District
Richard Nelson, administrator, Racine Public Schools

The Goal of the Sectional was to obtain reactions and recommendations of school district administrators to assist Barbara Thompson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in determining appropriate local, CESA, and State roles regarding basic skills education.

Mr. Nelson reviewed Racine's "Standards Program," a program developed at the request of the Board of Education. The Racine standards program consists of a series of checkpoints to review pupils' performance and learning rates. Students whose achievement scores are below the 25th percentile of national norms receive special assistance in the areas of Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics. The assistance is available during summer school and pull-out programs during the school year.

The checkpoints established for the program are: After Kindergarten, Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 10. Passing a locally devised competency based test is a requirement if students are to receive a certified diploma.

The program appears to be successful at this time. One unexpected result of the program has been a decrease in discipline problems.

Recommendations that resulted from the group discussions were:

Define the Basic Skills

Specific comments and recommendations:

1. The definition presented in the DPI Newsletter is too broad. It lacks specificity.

2. The Department should provide a definition that can be adopted/adapted to local needs.

3. The Department must provide a definition or someone else will.

4. More leadership from the Department is needed in the area Basic Skills.

Improve Basic Skills Instruction

Specific comments and recommendations:

1. The State's Basic Skills program should focus on improving instruction by stressing inservice education for teachers and administrators.

2. The State effort should stress more pedagogy in teacher preparation programs and assist districts to utilize the extended services of universities in teacher inservice efforts and program development.

Improve Basic Skills Curriculums

Specific comments and recommendations:

1. Basic Skills programs should not be developed at the expense of a balanced curriculum -- including the Arts, Physical Education, Counseling, etc. By improving the quality of instruction, we can improve achievement in the basics without impinging on the time allocated for instruction in these other essential curriculum areas.

2. Stress K-12 developmental programs.

3. The State's program should assist each teacher to reinforce good writing, speaking, and listening skills. If we are to stress the basics--test for competencies--then secondary teachers must also reinforce the basics.

Define the Problem (if one exists)

Specific comments and recommendations:

1. An assessment should be conducted to determine if a basic skills problem exists in Wisconsin. The assessment should be based on the Department's definition of Basic Skills. A concern was expressed that the issue may be made more political in nature than anything else.

Provide Title II Basic Skills Dollars to Develop Programs

Specific comments and recommendations:

1. The dollars should be used to develop programs that focus on improving education competencies. Summer programs that would provide time for teachers and administrators to prepare curriculums--teachers teaching teachers and credited workshops were all suggested.

2. Application forms for Title II funds should be kept brief.

In Summary, the most consistent recommendations were to:

1. Provide a practical definition of Basic Skills.
2. Develop a Basic Skills program that improves teacher competencies.
3. Provide stronger and more visible leadership in the Basic Skills areas.

Section on Gifted and Talented Education

Panelists: William Paton, administrator, Oconomowoc Public Schools
Ronald Wojack, administrator, Greenfield Public Schools
William Stimeling, administrator, River Falls Public Schools

It is readily apparent that the major issue facing those of us concerned in this area deals with the question of how we shall provide equal and quality programming opportunities which respond to the needs of all children. Clearly, the gifted and talented have not as yet been recognized as having an exceptional educational need as is true of those suffering from a wide range of physical, mental or emotional handicaps.

While there have been attempts to plan and initiate programs for the gifted and talented, limitations on federal funding have acted to constrain many who might wish to enter into this field. There are, however, a number of programs which have been implemented using only local funds. Increasingly, however, the latter find themselves in dire straits as they must compete for monies which are sorely limited because of the economic situation and because of the cost control formula.

The following -- while not at all exhaustive -- are some of the problems which were identified by those in attendance at the session:

1. There are a number of school boards that view programs for the gifted and talented child as "an expensive luxury."

2. There is a shortage of teachers who are specially prepared to work with the gifted and talented child.

3. There remains a feeling on the part of many that the curriculum is already over-extended and cannot accommodate yet another speciality-oriented classroom activity.

4. There are still those in the lay community who view programs for the gifted and talented child as evidence of "an elitist" activity.

5. There is evidence of some over-zealousness on the part of those encouraging programs for the gifted and talented whose aggressive and abrasive acts foster negative reactions to the initiation of programs for the gifted and talented child.

6. The everpresent problem of cost controls combined with declining enrollments and inflation acts as serious impediments to the implementation of new programs.

It became apparent from several discussions that legislation would be introduced into the next session of the Wisconsin Legislature in an attempt to come to grips with the need for establishing the identity of the gifted and talented group. It was also indicated that there are lawsuits presently before the courts challenging districts which have "failed" to provide equal opportunity for all the children who they are required to serve.

In an attempt to gain some degree of closure within the limited time provided, attendees were asked to suggest ways in which the Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, and individual superintendents could make themselves heard in a positive way regarding programming for the gifted and talented child. The following are suggestions and interpretations of comments made during the session:

The Department of Public Instruction should:

1. Give voice on a statewide basis to a strong policy statement regarding the provision of equal educational opportunity for all students -- including the gifted and talented child.

2. Act as a data collector and disseminator regarding, but not limited to, the following:

   A. Materials available from existing programs
   B. The planning and implementation guidelines developed by individual school districts.

3. Establish and publish general guidelines relating to but not limited to the following:

   A. The identification process
   B. Establishing reasonable parameters
   C. Assessment instruments

4. Provide competent personnel who are available to assist LEAs as they strive to plan and initiate programs.

5. Exert every effort to bring additional pressures upon teacher training institutions so that the latter may move forward in developing undergraduate programs designed to provide a reservoir of instructors in this vital area.

The Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators:

1. Provide active and continuing input to the DPI relative to:

   A. The development of policy
   B. The development of guidelines

2. Reiterate a strong policy regarding the provision of equal educational opportunity for all children.

3. Develop a legislative position and work strongly in support of it.

4. Provide opportunities for programming representatives of successful gifted and talented activities at its several meetings and conventions.

5. Resist any legislative effort to reduce DPI staff where those individuals have been assigned to working with LEAs in gifted and talented education.

The Individual Superintendent should:

1. Become personally conversant with the literature regarding the gifted and talented child.

2. Support existing programs designed to come to grips with children who have special talents.

3. Take a strong local leadership position regarding the need for programs for the "new handicapped."

4. Seek the involvement and the support of local business people as well as those in the arts and sciences who can contribute their time and expertise to building strong programs for the gifted and talented child.

5. Avoid "negotiating away" the flexibility and decision-making that is necessary to provide for the initiation of programs for the gifted and talented child.

The following criteria were suggested relative to the introduction of legislation at the state level dealing with programs for the gifted and talented child:

1. New legislation should not be introduced which would create yet another mandate.

2. Legislation introduced should recognize gifted and talented children as a unique group requiring special attention.

3. Legislation introduced should encourage local districts to use locally available creative skills in the development of programs.

4. Legislation introduced providing funding should target those resources towards staff development programs.

5. Any attempt to introduce programs for the gifted and talented child should be exempted from cost control formulas -- present and planned.

While the above criteria do not represent the considered and carefully thought through recommendations that typify WASDA positions, they do represent a positive step in moving ahead in an area which has been woefully neglected.

Section on Vocational Education Programs

Moderator: Marvin Lansing, administrator, Eau Claire School District

The primary objective of the section was to elicit suggestions from participants for strengthening and maintaining vocational education programs in high schools. Cited as of particular importance were:

- The role of the LEA
- The role of the CESA
- The role of the DPI
- The role of the federal government

Other concerns indicated were:

- The need for support of citizens and local school boards
- The need for addressing the national economic concern for meeting foreign productivity levels through better training.

The primary barrier to developing programs in vocational education is the lack of sufficient funds for facilities, personnel, and equipment.

The sessions were then opened to general discussion. The following is a compilation of ideas expressed by participants; with the ideas being organized into six general categories:

I. The role of the secondary schools in vocational education.

1. There is a need for the Legislature to better define the roles of the members of the triple educational delivery system in the state; i.e., high school, VTAE, and University systems.

2. Means need to be found to resolve the opposition of some school boards and some district administrators to providing vocational education in high school.

3. There needs to be more cooperation among LEAs in jointly providing vocational education programs.

4. The state needs to explore other models for the delivery of vocational education such as area vocational centers for high school students.

5. Greater efforts need to be extended to secure the support of organized labor.

6. Data showing that students enrolled in vocational education classes do as well as or better in academic classes need to be given wider publicity.

II. Personnel concerns.

1. The current teacher shortage in vocational education areas requires greater emphasis on recruiting programs designed to bring more persons into teacher training programs.

2. Current teacher certification requirements need to be reviewed to determine if there are ways of facilitating the recertification of teachers from other educational areas.

3. Attention needs to be given to ways of facilitating the use of VTAE system teachers for teaching secondary school level students, including a review of certification requirements.

4. Schools need to review teacher contract provisos to determine whether additional incentives and rewards can be built in to attract larger numbers of teachers into vocational education.

5. In order to prevent the further loss of LVECs, incentives for schools retaining LVECs need to be developed including the possibility of higher levels of funding.

6. Training programs for vocational education teachers in dealing with the handicapped need to be expanded and improved.

III. Funding.

1. Categorical funding for vocational education should be enacted on a permanent basis.

2. Cost controls cause boards and administrators to resist vocational education programs since the controls are perceived to be more expensive.

3. The 60:40 percent split of federal Vocational Education Act funds between post-secondary and secondary school needs to be reviewed for modification.

4. The formula for distribution of state aids should be modified to include a weighting provision for vocational education costs.

5. Teachers of traditional subjects resist the development of vocational education programs since they feel that funds will be diverted from important academic areas.

6. Schools need to explore the possibilities of obtaining funding for vocational education programs from business and industry.

7. Many school districts resist federal funds designed to promote the development of vocational education. They feel that the federal funds are eventually withdrawn leaving the districts with a costly program to maintain with funds which it may or may not have.

IV. Relationships with the Vocational, Technical and Adult Education System.

1. LEAs resist contracting with the VTAE system since costs there are frequently higher than for comparable programs delivered locally.

2. The VTAE system needs to examine the possibilities for providing subsidies to high schools entering into contracts for instructional programs. (It was noted that some VTAE districts now provide some subsidies.)

3. Consideration needs to be given to the VTAE contracting with local high schools for instruction where high school facilities and personnel are available.

V. Special needs students.

1. Schools an advocate for the special needs student. This person would be expected to provide for greater mainstreaming and for the development of supplmentary aids so that the special needs student will be more able to function in a regular class situation.

2. More emphasis needs to be placed in meeting the needs of girls for vocational education programs that have been previously unavailable or offered on a limited basis; programs leading to nontraditional employment.

VI. The role of the DPI.

1. The DPI needs to clarify its role in promoting vocational education.

2. The DPI needs to promote values education.

3. The DPI should undertake a study of the delivery system for vocational education including the role and function of the L"EC.

4. Means should be found to ensure that all students have more equal opportunity to participate in vocational education.

Section on Declining Enrollment

Panelists: Jerome Coaty, administrator, Whitnall School District
Jack Magnuson, administrator, Menomonee Falls School District
Michael Malone, administrator, Port Edwards School District
Lyle Martens, administrator, Seymour School District

From the late 1950s through the 1960s, public school enrollments grew. It was an exciting time of building and having young, enthusiastic and aggressive citizens who wanted the best for the education of their children. School districts were encouraged to be bold and courageous; long-range planning for continued growth was in vogue. However, enrollments began to decline even before many of the new buildings were completed.

The 1980s seem to be bringing older citizens or those without children who are discontented with the still rising cost of education. School districts are now faced with the closing of schools, staff reductions, older staffs, lower staff moral and up to one-half of the students in elementary schools and one-half in high schools; rather than the previous two-thirds and one-third distribution. This redistribution makes the per pupil cost of school districts become extremely high.

Closing elementary schools has been difficult enough to deal with but now districts find it even more traumatic to think of closing middle schools and high schools. It is "crunch time."

There is no one model to follow in addressing problems associated with declining enrollments; there are only strategies. Administrators must look at various models and share strategies. Following are examples from three districts:

1. Menomonee Falls - Closed five elementary schools and laid off 150 teachers.

   A. Options developed for the teacher and administration reductions were:

      1. A lay-off clause in the union contract drawn up by a lawyer and agreed upon by the union and school board.

      2. Early retirement at 62 years for teachers and administrators.

      3. Career alternative--can take a year off to try another career. If it doesn't work out, can return and retain tenure status.

B. Opened the high school classes to older adults to have the opportunity to take classes with the high school students.

C. A committee composed of citizens, administrators, teachers, and students was formed to take a long-range look at the declining enrollment problem.

2. Whitnall - A model for planning and organizing for a school closing.

In July 1977, an Ad Hoc Committee was formed and given the charge to submit recommendations, substantiated by data, to the board's planning committee on or before December 1, 1977, as to the best use of school facilities including the possible closing of an elementary school before the start of the 1978-79 school year.

The Ad Hoc Committee was made up of three school board members, two administrators, one teacher, and citizens from three elementary schools, a senior citizen and two citizens at large.

The Ad Hoc Committee was divided into sub-committees consisting of the following five sub-committees:

Committees and Responsibilities

Space Committee - Review size and number of classrooms and present use and condition of the school plant.

Census and New Community Development - Review enrollment of the 1976 school year; the projected enrollment for the next three to five years; the 1977 school year enrollment; and first grade figures for the last five years and five years projected. Contact governmental agencies in Hales Corners and Greenfield to find what potential of population growth may affect future pupil population.

School Budget and Relocation - Study financial outlay for 1976, 1977, and try to give a three-year projection on each school and possible per pupil cost. Review the Edgerton budget for 1976 and 1977. Consider the cost of relocation of students at each school.

Public Opinion and Liaison - Survey the growth potential of the parochial schools within the Whitnall School District. Survey how parents of former Edgerton pupils feel a year following the school closing. What was pupil loss to parochial schools from Edgerton closing.

Public Relations - Provide the "Hub" and the "Post" with news of the committee's work and meetings.

A time line was developed and generally adhered to. It consisted of the following:

Time Line

July 16, 1977	Committee members submitted for approval
August 1	First meeting of the committee
November 1	Committee interim report submitted to the Board of Education at its regular meeting
November 22	Committee report and recommendations presented to School Board Planning Committee for approval
December 5	Committee report submitted to the Board of Education by committee chairman and Planning Committee at its regular meeting
January 16, 1978	Decision by the Board of Education on all recommendations submitted

At the March 5, 1979, Board of Education Meeting, the Board voted to close Valley View School. The transfer of the Valley View students to Hales Corners Elementary and Jefferson Elementary went smoothly and the 1979-80 school year found Whitnall with one less elementary school.

Presently, Valley View no longer belongs to the district. It has been sold to a public relations firm for $375,000 and the building and land are back to the tax rolls.

3. Port Edwards - An advisory committee was formed by the school board in May 1980, and is to report back to the board by July 1981. Questions posed to the committee by the board are as follows:

    1. How long can Port Edwards remain an independent school district?
    2. Will there come a time when the newer K-4 elementary building should be closed and have only one K-12 building?
    3. At what number in the decline do you question the quality of educational program provided?
    4. What are the options of the citizens?
    5. What are the projections on future enrollment?

    The advisory committee is composed of the following sub-committees:

    1. Fiscal Impact of Declining Enrollments
    2. Community Attitude
    3. Teacher Option
    4. Curriculum

Questions from the Audience:

1. Does geographic area of the school district make a difference?
2. How was the administrative staff involved?
3. How were administrative lay-offs handled?
4. During declining enrollments, were teacher-pupil ratios changed?
5. How do you go about selling a school?
6. How did you involve unions?
7. How about combining grades in the elementary school?

8. A different model proposed than the citizen advisory committee idea presented:
   A. An administrative team made a study and presented a report to the board.
   B. The board took the report to the community for a hearing of reactions to the report.
   C. The board then made a decision.

Recommendations to the Department of Public Instruction:

1. Develop strategies for dealing with the problem of declining enrollments, rather than just one model as a solution.
2. Make a commitment to planning for the decline on a statewide basis. The Department of Public Instruction must have all groups involved in dealing with the problem.
3. Take a new look at the possibilities for district consolidation where communities can agree on consolidation as an amicable and reliable solution.
4. Explore the magnet school concept between two or more districts as it is in the City of Milwaukee. Students are transported for special education. Why not with regular education classes, especially in high school? Clustered or satellite concept.
5. Promote the sharing of staff between districts.
6. Support early retirement opportunities for school personnel at age 55 with 30 or more years of service.
7. Suggest that some buildings might be "mothballed" by renting instead of selling.
8. Promote a complete examination of the financial aid formula with attention to such areas as:
   A. Cost controls
   B. More pay for secondary pupils because it costs more to educate them.
9. Consider the impact of nonpublic school enrollments in viewing projected enrollment declines and establish guidelines for the definition of a private school.
10. Each district should establish long range goals for dealing with enrollment decline.
11. Negotiate well defined lay-off clauses.
12. Develop new employe career exploration programs.

Conferees expressed a need for the Department of Public Instruction or the Governor to take more specific action with regard to problems associated with declining enrollments. Persons are needed to address this matter who have vision, clarity, insight and courage to look beyond the past to the future in order to maintain a commitment to the delivery of quality education.

Section on Inservice Education

Panelists: Harold Billings, administrator, Ladysmith School District
Earl Brakken, administrator, Kettle Moraine School District
Sam Castagna, administrator, West Allis School District
Orlyn Zieman, administrator, Appleton School District

The presentation by Mr. Brakken, "Establishing and Maintaining Inservice Education as a Continuing District Program - A Strategy that Works," outlined the manner in which Kettle Moraine's inservice program was created. Mr. Brakken emphasized that the district's teachers initially expressed the need for instituting a quality inservice program. The plan was developed by a core of 15 staff members representing all schools in the district. The entire staff (including support personnel) then met with facilitators to establish the specific needs of the staff and to plan inservice activities.

Mr. Brakken stated that an inservice program must be established as part of the regular teaching schedule in order to demonstrate commitment and provide relevance. Therefore, the district's schools are dismissed early one day weekly to provide one and one-half hours of inservice training time.

Prior to the inception of the program, the district required that all teachers complete college coursework. Tuition was reimbursed by the district. In this manner, teachers were able to progress on the salary schedule while receiving tuition-free credit for coursework; which was not always relevant to classroom assignments. Accordingly, the school board eliminated the requirement of continuing education which, in turn, provided a budget for inservice education. Part of the budget, controlled by a continuing staff education committee composed of teachers, provides funds on a competitive basis to individuals who make application. These funds allow teachers to engage in educational pursuits in addition to the regular weekly inservice program.

Mr. Brakken stressed that there are four components involved in a successful inservice program: (a) commitment on the part of everyone involved, (b) structure, (c) time, and (d) money.

The West Allis inservice program was described by Sam Castagna, in his presentation, "An Exemplary Inservice Program for Preparing Teachers to Teach and to Serve Handicapped Children." Mr. Castagna noted that there has been a growing need for inservice education over the past several years. One factor contributing to this need is the greater proportion of older teachers to newly-trained teachers currently in the classroom due to declining enrollments and the use of seniority to determine staff lay-offs. This procedure creates a larger segment of teachers who need updating in knowledges, skills, and techniques. Other factors involved in the need for district inservice programs are the spiraling costs of college and university courses and the necessity of addressing specific local concerns.

Inservice training in exceptional education is extremely critical due to new legal mandates, the extensive growth in programs, and the need to involve nonpublic as well as public school teachers, board members, parents, and students. Several topics have been addressed in the West Allis inservice program. These include such items as instructional program changes, innovative teaching methods, new legal requirements, increased paperwork demands (e.g., IEP's), and new teaching skills.

Mr. Castagna emphasized that a variety of approaches must be used to maintain a viable inservice program. Suggested approaches included teachers teaching teachers, use of district staff or outside consultants, university courses designed to meet district or regional needs, conferences and workshops, visits to classrooms, and independent study contracts. Techniques which could be used included lecture, discussion groups, simulation and role playing, panels, parent presentations, and video-tape recordings. Topics could be addressed in one meeting, a series of meetings, or could span several months or years.

Mr. Castagna stressed that teachers must be involved in determining their training needs and in planning the inservice program. He also emphasized that an evaluation component must be included in every program. Other factors which should be considered when planning an inservice program are the use of rewards such as school board credit, stipends, certificates. and the assurance that the setting will be conducive to understanding and concentration.

The problem of training staff to work with non-English speaking children was addressed by Orlyn Zieman in his presentation, "An Exemplary Inservice Program for Preparing Teachers to Teach and to Service Children New to Our Nation and Our Schools." Mr. Zieman indicated that Appleton has the fourth largest population of Hmong refugees in the United States. The rapid influx of these children into the schools created a critical need to train teachers in ESL techniques and to provide them with information concerning the Hmong culture.

A summer program was developed with funding under ESEA, Title IV-C. Twenty teachers, including those from nonpublic schools, were selected for training. These teachers worked with the children in the morning and then participated in afternoon training sessions with resource people. In addition, four workshops were planned for the school year using materials and video-tape recordings prepared during the summer program.

Mr. Zieman stated that a meaningful inservice program develops when there is a well-defined problem, the people affected want assistance, a structure is established, and the opportunity for direct application is provided.

<u>The following recommendations resulted from the workshop sessions</u>:

1. The DPI should support flexibility for school districts in establishing the length of school days to allow for inservice training time during the regular school day.
2. The DPI should demonstrate a continuing commitment to quality inservice education by providing resource personnel, materials, and funding.

Section on School Drop-outs

Panelists: Donald Hafeman, administrator, Madison Metropolitan School District
Charles Ellis, Madison Metropolitan School District
James Clark, Madison Metropolitan School District

The Madison staff presented the philosophy and resources developed by the MMSD to cope with drop-out prevention and its correlate dealing with truancy problems. Dr. Hafeman provided a conceptual framework for addressing the drop-out issue, shared approaches the MMSD has taken, and solicited reactions from the audience regarding the strategy. This program has apparently resulted in the lowest drop-out rate for a large urban district in Wisconsin, yet Hafeman was quick to point out that he does not feel that they have been successful in dealing with the problem as yet since drop-out rates are still unacceptably high and increasing.

The audience discussion which followed focused on the lack of special state aids for drop-out prevention efforts, the negative effect of state cost controls on initiating new programs, and philosophical objections to the development of flexible alternatives and services for students who react negatively to traditional school programs. Dr. Hafeman's reaction to such objections was that it is his philosophy that the schools must focus on meeting student needs rather than the reverse; that alternative programs and services must be based on carefully assessed student needs, and that he did not consider his program to be "permissive." He felt that educators do not have all of the answers yet and that we must continue to remain open and flexible in our efforts to resolve truancy and drop-out problems.

This sectional did not attempt to develop a firm recommendation to the State Superintendent regarding the posture which the DPI should take, but rather provided an opportunity for those in attendance to discuss the structure and philosophy of a comprehensive program. The section was enlightening to all participants and the wide-range of options currently available to all school districts for alternative programs and services was presented for those who make the decision to seriously address the problems associated with early school leaving.

School Truancy Problems

During the past few years the rate of truancy at LaFollette High School (Madison) has increased substantially. As a result, the drop-out rate has increased from approximately 5 to 6 percent to 12 to 15 percent (see drop-out studies of classes '78 through '80). In virtually 100 percent of the drop-out cases, considerable truancy precedes the withdrawal.

In conducting longitudinal studies of individual drop-outs, these students seem to fit into three broad categories with different characteristics. These categories are:

1. The School Phobic - generally misses the entire day, stays at home with assorted real and imagined ailments--the attendance pattern usually begins early in elementary school with annual absentee rates of 30 to 50 days. This student is generally a loner lacking in self-confidence, feels incompatible in the presence of other children, and uses avoidance as a major coping mechanism. In high school with an attendance pattern which finds the student out of class one or two days a week, he/she often gets behind in work, fails classes, and many times will withdraw completely. Attempts by counselor, social worker, parent conferences are usually unsuccessful. This group represents a very small percentage of the total school population.

2. Chronic School Problems - this student generally has had problems in school almost from the beginning, has low achievement motivation, poor work habits, short attention span, and has to be prodded by teachers in order to achieve anything. This student is frequently disruptive in class and has low skill levels due in part to limited ability and compounded by low achievement levels.

   Students in this category can be identified as probable drop-outs with a great deal of accuracy in the middle school. In high school, the characteristics of low achievement, short attention span, and boredom result in the student simply refusing to attend classes.

   In order to successfully work with this student, programs must be developed in the earlier years to improve achievement levels and increase achievement motivation. Attempts at the high school level to work with this student are generally unsuccessful.

3. Social Truant - this student has average to good skill levels and has achieved well in elementary and middle school. There are no learning problems in the classroom and the student may even do quite well when he/she is in attendance.

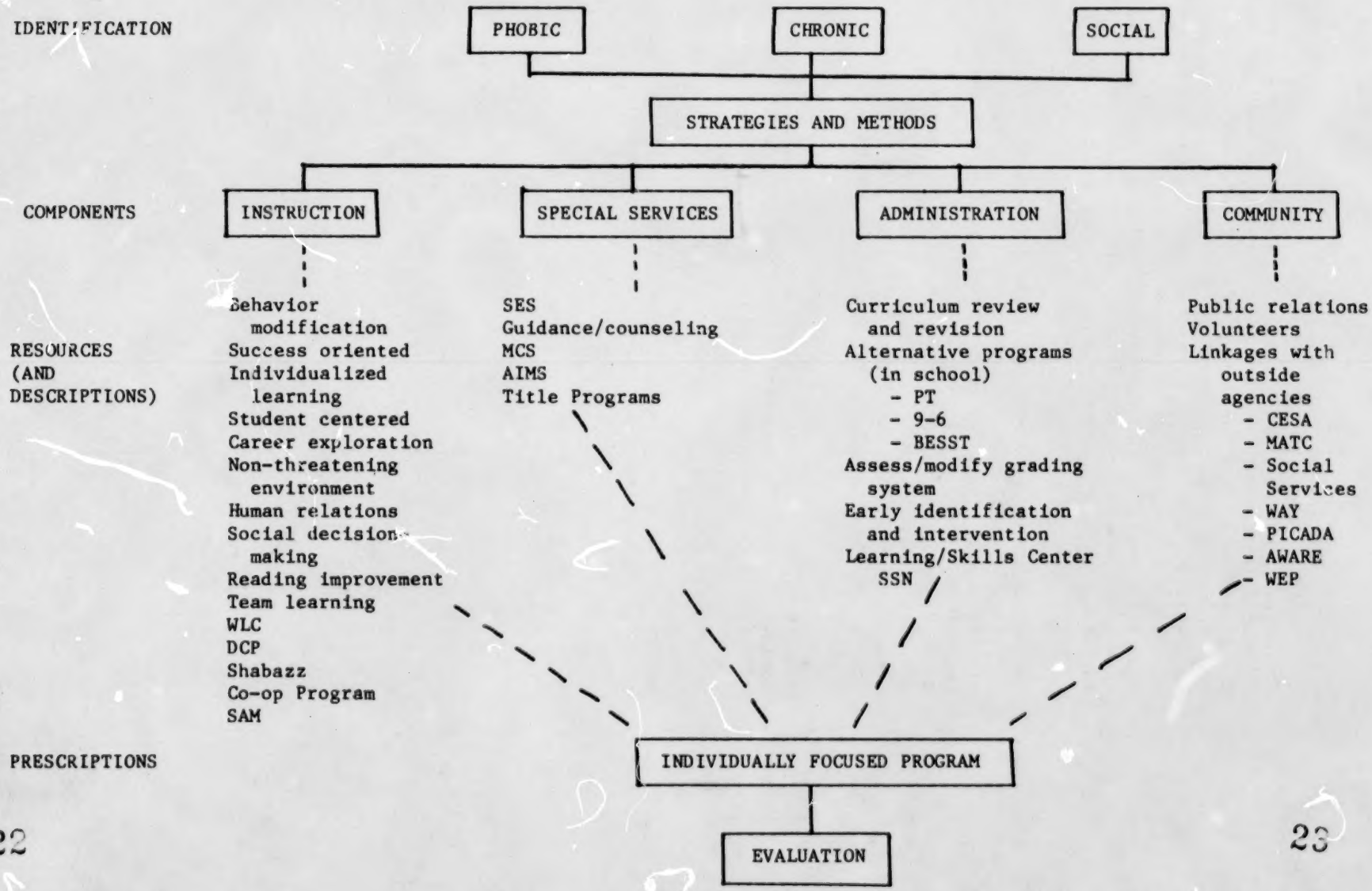
   The social truant is experiencing a severe reaction to the adolescent period. His/her personal value system is completely reordered, with education very low on the priority list. Socializing, the opposite sex, drugs, parties, and part-time jobs all rate much higher. This student might be considered almost psychologically uneducable and is not able to formulate any long-range goals. The limit of his/her future is Friday night. He/she does not consider consequences of personal behavior and operates only impulsively in the present. Social truancy is an acute condition that happens at different times to different students. This student might be achieving at a very high level, then almost dramatically falls completely apart. The most common period for social truancy is in second semester, grade 9 or first semester, grade 10.

The social peer group which also holds the same values commands a great deal of power over the social truant and much pressure is exerted by members for others to be truant. Once a student becomes a part of this group it is very difficult to get out. Many students have made sincere efforts to escape but the task is not easy. Even former drop-outs who re-enroll with the greatest intentions often-times will find themselves in the same position of truancy. Other examples include students who have transferred to other schools, done well, and returned only to fall back into previous attendance patterns.

The social truant generally is in the school area for all or part of the day. He/she may attend one or possibly two classes but is truant for most of the time. He/she can be found in the commons, parking lot, local eating establishments or at other students' homes whose parents are not present. The potential social truant is not easy to identify early. This is the group that has expanded the most and is causing LaFollette High School its biggest problems.

Another aspect of social truancy might be described as the social outcast. This student usually has personal values or personality characteristics which alienate him/her from the majority of peers. He/she feels uncomfortable with social interactions in the school. This student often bands together with other school social outcasts and together they reject any and all identification with the school. If they are unable to achieve an acceptable level of social acceptance, they usually drop out as soon as they are old enough.

MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT RETENTION



Section on Goals for Elementary and Secondary Education

Panelists: Ellen Meister, administrator, Mequon-Thiensville School District
Charles R. Hilston, executive director, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators

Part I: General Summary

In 1972, a Statewide Task Force appointed by former State Superintendent William Kahl completed its charge to identify Educational Goals for Wisconsin. The eleven goals set forth, each in the form of learner outcomes, were then subjected to broad dissemination and study. The goals were accepted in 1973 by State Superintendent Barbara Thompson as appropriate for Wisconsin's elementary and secondary schools. Substantial implementation efforts followed.

The Task Force's work was followed by a Legislative initiative to establish and implement the 13 Standards for education in Wisconsin (Wis. Stats. 121.02). School districts were then faced with two comprehensive documents (one on goals and one on standards) which did not emphasize exactly the same educational outcomes. The 13 Standards received the greater attention during the 1970s and although the eleven Goals existed, their visibility continued to be relatively low after the initial flurry.

With almost a decade having passed since, and knowing that the Goals have formed an extremely useful backdrop for local school districts and statewide projects, the State Superintendent challenged district administrators at this conference to provide candid feedback on how the Goals for Elementary and Secondary Education in Wisconsin could be further used to give additional impetus to Wisconsin education in the 1980s.

The kinds of questions discussed, along with a sampling of responses of school district administrators follows concerning the validity and appropriateness of the current goal statements.

A. How realistic are these goals for the 1980s?

1. The goals are still current and give an appropriate direction to education in Wisconsin.
2. The fact that the goals and standards are not consistent was cited as a problem to be addressed; possibly by modifying (increasingly) the standards to be more inclusive of all the goals.
3. The original 11 Goals included Basic Skills; Career Education and Occupational Competence; Citizenship and Political Understanding; Creative, Constructive, and Critical Thinking; Cultural Appreciation; Economic Understanding; Human Relations; Lifelong Learning; Mental and Physical Health; Physical Environment; and Self-Realization. The group felt

that a 12th goal not included in 1972, a goal relating to values and ethics, should be reinstated for inclusion in the 1980s. Also, there may be two or three other goals to add at this time (e.g., community education). Subpoints, or interpretations should be added to some of the goals for the sake of clarity and/or elaboration. For example, the basic skills goal should reflect "test taking skills" and "resource information processing".

B. What process should be used to validate the goals and provide for their widespread review, updating, and revision?

1. Several school districts reported recent or current use of the goals with school boards, community based committees, staff groups, and the like.

2. The process of validation for the 1980s needs to be defined so that school districts fully understand what the expectations are.

3. Efforts at the state level should be made to give visibility to the goals, including making them widely available. The goals need to be reviewed in perspective with all of the other mandates upon education.

C. Are the goals of equal priority or should some ranking process be developed and if so, at what level, to establish the relative priority of each of the goals?

D. Are there some goals which are not appropriate as high priorities for the public educational system but may be appropriate goals for other agencies or social organizations to address?

E. Should the original task force be reconvened or some other group established to take care of unfinished business in relation to the Goals?

1. No clear answers were provided here (C, D & E) except that services and goals should be separated for discussion purposes.

2. The objectives, system, or technique of evaluation need definition. It should be up to local schools to handle their own educational goals based on the needs of their students. They should develop their own committees to address same. The unfinished business should then be confronted at both the state and local levels.

Part II: Suggestions and Observations From the Participants

The following comments are representative of the discussions in which over 50 district administrators from 16 CESAs participated:

A. Are the goals statements still appropriate for the public schools in the 1980s?

1. Goals are not consistent with the 13 Standards. The Standards have to fit the Goals. Goals should be established first, then Standards should be developed.

2. Goals statements directed at Values and Ethics should be reinstated.

3. Many schools do give high priority in their educational programming for the purpose of achieving the Educational Goals. Several districts indicated the state Goals had been used as a guide or resource at the local levels.

4. Goals are supplementary; they give direction to instruction. The state's delivery system for public education should be examined; supervisory leadership is lacking; too much inefficiency exists. The mission of the schools needs to be redefined.

5. Goals should include and emphasize international relations and cooperation.

6. Goal attainment is constrained by lack of fiscal resources; yet public accountability demands will increase during the 1980s.

7. The legal status of the Goals should be clarified by the State Superintendent and the implications for LEAs should be made clearer.

8. Goals should be established for all children, including those in the private schools; a statutory provision should apply to all.

9. Could the concept of community education be incorporated into the Goals?

10. The primary mission should be literacy or continuing education programs to aid students to find employment after high school graduation.

11. Are there equal educational opportunities for all students? The schools need financial help to achieve this. Some people thought it was impossible to accomplish under the present educational structure. There should be legal provisions to help the schools achieve this Goal. The delivery system needs to be restructured to allow equal educational opportunity.

12. How do these Goals effect handicapped children? Should the Educational Goals be restricted to the nonhandicapped or should they be revised to take into consideration the handicapped? Why aren't the Goals mainstreamed so they are for all students?

B. What process should be used to validate the Goals or to provide for their review and possible revision?

1. "Validation" needs to be defined, as well as "Goals," so the schools fully understand what they are expected to do. (Definitions adopted by the original task force: GOAL--Statement of broad directions, general purpose, or intent; LEARNER OUTCOME GOAL--Knowledge, skills, ability, and attitudes students should possess when they leave the high school.)

2. Validation must occur from the bottom up to be effective. Validation process should be a local challenge. Models for validation of Goals at the local level, from DPI, would be useful and appropriate.

3. Committees should be established which include parents, teachers, students, minorities, etc., to represent the entire population in reconsideration of the issue of Educational Goals.

4. The Goals should be examined to see what has happened at the state level to support and implement them.

5. Instructional experts at the local level could relate local activities to the Goals to assess what is being done and where gaps exist.

6. DPI staff should exhibit more ownership of the Goals to aid the schools and should relate the Goals to state level projects, programs, and activities.

7. Goal development and follow-up was dropped by DPI; no funding or specific proposals were developed.

C. Are Educational Goals at the state level of equal priority or should some ranking of their relative importance be made? If priorities are established among the Educational Goals, is this most appropriate as a state function or should it be a responsibility of local school districts?

1. Goals must be considered in view of inequities among districts (resources, programs, etc.).

2. The Goals should be prioritized; they are not of equal priority. The public should be included in the priority ranking but make it more detailed than just a simple ranking of 1 to 11. The public knows better what they want than do we as administrators. We are required by mandatory obligations to achieve those first and then address other issues as the needs of individual district warrants.

3. DPI should undertake a ranking of educational goals as well as an individual list of each school's ranking of the Educational Goals. This would better address the problem of students who leave a district to enter new schools or students migrating into a school as well as make it possible to identify the Goals these students have worked under previously.

4. The local school board is not the appropriate level for dealing with the instructional goals.

5. The Goals were not prioritized by the original task force or DPI; that was a responsibility they felt the local schools should assume in consideration of their own needs.

6. Districts must set their own Goals based on local values, attitudes, and resources. Some knowledge of what other districts determine their Goals to be would be helpful and of interest.

D. Are there some Goals which are not appropriate as high priorities for the public educational system but may be appropriate Goals for other agencies or social organizations to address?

1. Societal expectations for the schools are numerous and diverse and criticism is received when problems are not quickly resolved--and a lack of confidence then develops. Greater demands are on the horizon; Goals are needed to focus upon the legitimate role of the schools.

2. The public schools are expected to provide answers and solutions for a myriad of social illness, any of which may be fashionable at the time (drug abuse, alcohol, bussing or minorities, entertainment during summer months, handicapped services, juvenile delinquency, etc.). If these problems continue, the schools become the scapegoat and receive substantial criticism from the public. Goals should be set and publicized so that the public understands what the schools are obligated to accomplish through mandates or other directives.

3. Identify Goals based on the specific strategies needed to attain them and indicate if agencies other than local districts might be more appropriate to assume responsibility for them.

E. What resources and procedures would be involved in reviewing and reconsidering Wisconsin's Educational Goals? Should the original task force or some other group be set back up to take care of unfinished business.

1. It should be up to local schools to handle the development of their own Educational Goals based on the needs of their students. They should develop their own committees to be responsible for this.

2. Inservice programs to aid the schools in accomplishing the Goals should be designed. These should not become mandatory but rather motivational with substantial assistance from DPI staff.

3. Why drop the subject after so much work has been done by a task force? Funding should be found to continue the unfinished business and carry out the higher priorities.

4. Ask the schools and universities to review the Goals and indicate if they have or have not accomplished each of the Goals in their own setting.

5. A survey of schools regarding their Goals' activities would be useful for staff inservice purposes. An assessment of local efforts related to the Goals would be a motivational factor if voluntary and nonprescriptive.

Part III. Observations

A. It was difficult for many sectional participants to recommend specific actions regarding the Goals. Most participants seemed to be aware of them but were not quite sure what should, or could, be done with them other than using them as statements of intended outcomes.

B. The problems of diverse expectations, limited resources, different student groups, and inter-district variations in wealth and scope of programs were recognized by the administrators. The problem of addressing all the Goals comprehensively and enthusiastically seemed to be an overwhelming task.

C. There was clear indication that school districts do not need more mandates from the state. Technical assistance, models, and descriptive information regarding the Goals would be appropriate and welcome but prescriptive directives would be very unwelcome.

D. There was some general feeling that the DPI has not actively supported or promoted the Goals and that much visibility and utility might result if all DPI staff and programs embraced the Goals and integrated them into their programs and projects.

E. There was a general consensus that the original Goals work was well done and should not be ignored or needlessly repeated. Some additions to the Goals should be considered. Internal consistency among the Goal statements should be examined and perhaps some fine-tuning of the Goal statements should be made.

Part IV: Recommendations

A. The legal status of the Educational Goals should be clarified by the DPI including implications for local districts, and this information should be communicated to all LEAs.

B. The DPI should demonstrate ownership of the Goals integrating them into departmental activities, programs, and projects in a more proactive and visible manner.

C. The state should examine whether equal educational access and opportunity exist for all students regardless of geographic location. Common Goals are not meaningful if wide variations exist among and within districts.

D. The educational services delivery system in Wisconsin should be reexamined and restructured if needed to eliminate inefficiencies and ineffectivenesses where they are found to exist.

E. Educational Goals reconsideration, review, and validation should occur at several levels. A small working committee should be appointed by the State Superintendent to identify and recommend appropriate local, intermediate, and state level activities.

F. The Goals should be reviewed in consideration of their relevance to handicapped pupils and students in private schools.

G. Consideration should be given again to the addition of a Goal related to values and ethics and the role of the schools in these difficult areas.

H. A survey of local school districts should be conducted to identify Goal's related activities, processes, and products which could be shared with all districts and used as resources by LEAs on a voluntary basis.

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